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Department of State

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Origin

Info

Following is summary unclassified text memo of conversation between Federal

Republic Ambassador Grewe and Merchant November 21:

Grewe delivered personal message from Chancellor to Secretary, drawing special attention to Ambassador's statement of desirability, even necessity, for Four Power (US, UK, France, Federal Republic of Germany) consultations when Soviets announce measures against Berlin. Level of meeting and location to be arranged through ambassadors.

Grewe under instructions stresses gravity of situation which demanded firmness. German Foreign Office feels dangerous give in on question negotiations with Pankow. Dealing on technical questions involving our quadripartite status would jeopardize our policy of non-recognition and seriously involve prestige of West. Chancellor and Foreign Minister believe if West enters precipitously into arrangement appearing accede to Soviet pressure, effect could be demoralizing to Germans, other Europeans and encourage direct Pankow-Bonn talks.

Grewe

Drafted by:

11-24-58

Telegraphic transmission and

classification approved by:

E.L.

Edward T. Lampson

EUR:GER:GPA:JEM:Farland, Jr: saw

Clearances:

S/S CR

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Grewe stated nothing repeat nothing new in IZT. Agreement on traffic between Federal Republic and Berlin routine matter, representing at most legalization status quo.

personally sees
According to Grewe following alternatives open to Allies on Berlin: Should reject any GDR control over access to Berlin (a) turning back or (b) trying to break through by force. He asked what would be done in case airlift was mounted and Soviets withdrew from BASC. Merchant replied understood BASC not focal point navigational guidance for Allied planes but limited to filing of flight plans. Third possibility Grewe said was Allied call for negotiation with USSR, in advance of Soviet note on Berlin or in response. Weakness of West was that it seems always on defensive and courses of action he had mentioned were all defensive responses to Soviet moves. Saw psychological advantage to West taking offensive and demanding something. Suggested we propose negotiation of extra-territorial status for road and rail communication with Berlin or declare our willingness deal with GDR as USSR agents if they guaranteed extent and frequency of traffic would be maintained at present level.

Merchant asked Grewe's views on whether Soviet-GDR moves would be only against military traffic or include civilians. Would there be full or limited blockade directed against Allied garrisons? Question directly affected scale our airlift planning. Was Bonn studying possibilities of economic retaliation? To what extent was Berlin's dependence on East German brown coal an adverse factor?

Grewe replied one could not exclude possibility civilian traffic would be affected by blockade — legal basis civilian (especially air) traffic not clear. Federal

Government

SYNOPSIS

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Government had often tried find retaliatory measures. Only field with any prospects was interzonal trade. Even here no countermeasures which would be effective in long run and Berlin would probably be cut off from Soviet Zone brown coal. Further, if Communists had embarked on course with important political goals, they would not be deterred by economic countermeasures.

Mr. Merchant assured Ambassador Grewe we viewed Soviet moves against Berlin very seriously, not as limited action but as opening of major political offensive on broad front. We won't be pushed around. Important Allies move in unison.

Full text follows by pouch.

(Dulles)
(E72)

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